UNITED
NATIONS

DP

Governing Council
of the
United Nations
Development Programme

Distr.
GENERAL

DP/1991/20
15 May 1991

ORIGINAL: ENGLISH

Thirty-eighth session
3-21 June 1991, New York
Item 3 (c) of the provisional agenda

SUPPORT

SPECIAL PROGRAMMES OF ASSISTANCE

Refugees, displaced persons and returnees

Report of the Administrator

SUMMARY

The present report has been prepared in response to Governing Council decision 90/22 on refugees, displaced persons and returnees. The report describes initiatives taken by the Administrator at the policy and institutional levels and gives country-specific examples of the response of the United Nations Development Programme. The activities of UNDP vis-à-vis natural disasters not involving population displacement are described in document DP/1991/64. The report concludes with proposals for the establishment of a humanitarian programmes support unit.

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I. INTRODUCTION

1. The Governing Council in its decision 90/22 of 22 June 1990 recognized, inter alia, that relief, rehabilitation, reconstruction and development are part of the same continuum and laid out ways in which the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) should adjust its normal programme activities to take account, in collaboration with other United Nations agencies concerned, of the special developmental needs of people uprooted by emergencies.

2. Over the last few years, UNDP has become increasingly involved in the coordination and management of emergencies. As a result of the Gulf crisis, the resident representatives in the Islamic Republic of Iran, Jordan, Syria and Turkey, in their capacities as resident coordinators and United Nations Disaster Relief Organization (UNDRO) representatives, have been deeply involved in coordinating United Nations system responses to massive movements of displaced persons. Six resident representatives in Africa are acting full time as the Secretary-General's special coordinators for relief operations in their countries of assignment. In many other countries, resident representatives, in fulfilling their roles as resident coordinators, in terms of General Assembly resolutions 36/225 of 17 December 1981 and 44/136 of 15 December 1989, have major preoccupations with security and other emergencies.

3. Against this background, a consensus has been developing that emergency operations which are not firmly anchored in the development process are unlikely to produce durable solutions, and indeed, may actively harm the development process. The former dichotomy of approach - whereby emergencies were managed totally separately from longer-term development efforts - has been reflected in the past in both recipient and donor institutional arrangements as well as in conceptual approaches. Under the new strategies described below, UNDP will endeavour to strengthen relief-to-development linkages throughout its field operations, so that a coordinated and comprehensive United Nations system response to emergencies, and the human suffering they entail, can be orchestrated in the future. To assist him with the implementation of this new approach, the Administrator appointed a Senior Advisor for Humanitarian Affairs in November 1990. Since then, funding for rapid needs assessments in population displacement situations has been approved for several countries. Details are provided in the report of the Administrator on Special Programme Resources (DP/1991/64).

II. UNDP RESPONSE TO EMERGENCIES, REFUGEES AND DISPLACED PERSONS IN 1991

A. Policy and institutional issues

4. In November 1990, a formal letter to field staff signed by the Administrator and the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees established an agreed work plan for the year. Implementation of the agreement is currently under way in the identification of regions and countries for

particular cooperative efforts and joint approaches in training. Work has also been resumed on the development of a common database on refugees and displaced persons affairs. While problems of refugees and displaced persons have been the subject of informal discussions at round-table meetings, the round-table meeting for Rwanda (scheduled for November 1991) will be the first occasion that this issue has been formally included on the agenda in line with the agreed joint work programme. It is planned to focus upon resource mobilization efforts in future round-table and Consultative Group meetings for those countries with problems of displaced persons.

5. UNDP continues to maintain its close working relations with the United Nations Disaster Relief Organization (UNDRO) and with emergency units within the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), the World Food Programme (WFP) and the World Health Organization (WHO). More systematic contacts with officials responsible for emergency operations in bilateral donor headquarters are being established, both to ensure that all parties are apprised of the role of UNDP in this area, as well as in view of the organization's resource mobilization targets. Furthermore, UNDP has made available the services of a staff member on a short-term basis to assist in the system-wide study of the capacity of the United Nations on refugees, returnees and displaced persons, as requested in Economic and Social Council resolution 1990/78 of 27 July 1990.

6. An inter-bureau UNDP Gulf Task Force, chaired by the Director of the Regional Bureau for the Arab States and Europe (RBASE), is serving as an advisory body to the Administrator to review and recommend assistance to countries affected by the Gulf crisis. This consists of funding for needs assessments and initial assistance to implement a human development adjustment strategy described in the report of the Administrator on the impact of the Gulf Crisis on developing countries (DP/1991/60) to respond to the world-wide effects of the crisis. This strategy has been formulated in close collaboration with Governments concerned, UNDP field offices and relevant United Nations agencies.

7. Several reports of the Secretary-General, supported by General Assembly resolutions (for example, resolution 41/70 of 3 December 1986 on international cooperation to avert new flows of refugees, resolution 43/51 of 5 December 1988 on the Declaration on the Prevention and Removal of Disputes and Situations Which May Threaten International Peace and Security and on the Role of the United Nations in this Field and resolution 43/154 of 8 December 1988 on human rights and mass exoduses), have emphasized the importance of early warning activities. The Secretary-General has established an Office for Research and the Collection of Information (ORCI) with the primary function of enhancing the role of the United Nations in the early warning of potential crises, including mass population displacement. Following an ORCI report on the coordination of activities related to the early warning of possible refugee flows, a regular inter-agency consultative mechanism has been established for the early warning of mass displacement. UNDP is part of the early-warning working group, established by decision 1991/9 of the Administrative Committee on Coordination (ACC) on early warning regarding new flows of refugees and displaced persons.

8. UNDP is following up with the United Nations Development Fund for Women (UNIFEM) to ensure that the problems of refugee women and children are included in overall UNIFEM initiatives.

9. UNDP is fully involved with the development of educational and vocational training programmes with relevant non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and United Nations specialized agencies, including UNHCR, the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), UNICEF and the International Labour Organisation (ILO) in the follow-up to the World Conference on Education for All, held at Jomtien, Thailand, in 1990, since it concerns refugees and displaced persons. Progress to date includes consultation meetings held between the participating organizations; the identification and definition of their interests and priorities in education and vocational training; and the establishment of an inter-organizational working group to develop, inter alia, pilot joint programmes.

10. In order to strengthen UNDP capacity in these emergency management areas, the Administrator has undertaken several initiatives. UNDP and UNDRO are jointly managing the Disaster Management Training Programme whose curriculum includes all types of emergencies and their consequences, including the issue of population displacement. Its twin objectives are to stimulate more strategic approaches to emergency preparedness and management at the country level and to improve the skills and teamwork of United Nations in-country disaster management teams. The Programme represents a unique effort to bring together all country-level participants (i.e., host government officials, United Nations system representatives, bilateral donors and NGO representatives). A training team comprising staff members from UNDP, UNDRO, UNHCR, WFP and WHO, has been created. Regional and country courses in Latin America and Africa will start in 1991.

11. UNDP and UNDRO are also producing a joint Disaster Manual, which will be made available to selected field offices for testing and comment in 1991 and will be distributed to all field officers in early 1992. Both the Disaster Management Training Programme and the Disaster Manual will be reviewed by an inter-agency task force in late 1991.

12. Pending the establishment of longer-term administrative and financial arrangements, the Administrator has recently approved a project, funded from Special Programme Resources (SPR), to provide nine months of consultancy services to enable the recruitment of two consultants to develop frameworks for rapid needs assessments and to respond to the requests of Governments and UNDP field offices. Additionally, the consultants will develop a series of model projects focusing upon ways to identify production enterprises benefiting both displaced persons and indigenous people in a given location.

13. Through the UNDP Task Force on Humanitarian Affairs (formerly the Task Force on Refugees, Returnees and Displaced Persons), all relevant divisions and bureaux have participated in discussions regarding initiatives to strengthen the role of UNDP in the field and at headquarters in responding to the future needs of disaster-affected countries. In February 1991, the Task

Force established a Working Group to review finance, recruitment and procurement procedures in order to enhance the capacity of UNDP to respond rapidly to emergencies.

B. Specific emergencies and population displacements

14. The preceding section of the present paper addressed general policy and institutional issues concerned with UNDP responses to emergencies and population displacements. The following paragraphs give examples of various elements of country-level responses during the past year.

1. Early warning systems

15. The resident representatives in a number of countries (e.g., Bangladesh, Colombia and Ethiopia) are working with Governments to develop emergency prevention and preparedness strategies which include early warning systems and contingency planning programmes.

2. Relief and emergency aid

16. As a result of the Gulf crisis, UNDP worked closely with UNDRO and other United Nations specialized agencies, in the field and at headquarters, to coordinate the United Nations system emergency assistance to Governments in meeting the needs of evacuees, refugees, returnees, and displaced persons who were affected by the crisis during the pre-war period. UNDP was represented on the missions sent by the Secretary-General to Iraq and Kuwait in March 1991 and again to Iraq in April 1991. Subsequently, UNDP has provided the Coordinator (resident in Baghdad) and other relief staff for the Humanitarian Relief Programme in Iraq. The Resident Representatives in the Islamic Republic of Iran and Turkey have also been deeply involved with the coordination of post-war refugee-related responses in these countries. Of the $4 million approved by the Administrator for assistance to countries affected by the crisis, 40 per cent has been committed for initiatives in affected countries in the Arab States and Asia regions.

17. In Angola, the Resident Coordinator continued to be responsible for the coordination of emergency food, health and water services under the national relief programme and through the special coordination arrangements. In Liberia, the Resident Coordinator, in cooperation with UNHCR, WFP, UNDRO and UNICEF launched needs assessment missions for 800,000 refugees, and $1.6 million IPF funds have been allocated for the relief operations for 1.5 million uprooted population. In Ethiopia, through its Emergency Preparedness Prevention Group, UNDP coordinates emergency responses for approximately 6.1 million affected Ethiopians. In Mozambique, the Resident Coordinator has been designated the United Nations Special Relief Coordinator. Additionally, the United Nations Office for Emergency Relief Operations has been strengthened by the provision of logistic support. Four

projects are being financed under the Trust Fund for Emergency Assistance to Mozambique, and a further three emergency projects are being funded through the IPF.

18. In Somalia, before the evacuation of the United Nations community in January 1991, the UNDP Resident Representative, acting as the Secretary-General's Special Coordinator of Emergency Operations, was developing emergency assistance programmes for the internally displaced and an interim emergency assistance programme (for six months) for refugees in Northern Somalia. In Sudan, the Resident Coordinator, in his capacity as the Secretary-General's Special Coordinator, continues to work with the Government and other parties concerned in assisting with the coordination of a massive famine relief programme for approximately 8 million people. As a result, the scope of Operation Lifeline Sudan has been expanded to emphasize the continuing emergency needs in the South and the growing needs in the North. The country programme has also been substantially revised to respond more effectively to the 1991 famine emergency. In Thailand, the UNDP Regional Representative, serving as Director of the United Nations Border Relief Operation, was responsible for administrative and logistical backstopping services for Cambodian refugees on the Thai border. A special mission to study possible repatriation strategies was mounted under SPR funding.

3. Recovery, rehabilitation and development

19. In the context of the International Conference on Assistance to Refugees in Africa (ICARA) II, and giving due regard to the linkage between emergency aid, rehabilitation, reintegration and development programmes, UNDP has been focusing, at an early stage, on the need to reinforce the local socio-economic infrastructure. For example, in Angola, UNDP is providing support for the implementation of socio-economic rehabilitation programmes for 1.9 million displaced persons. In Mozambique, in cooperation with UNHCR and within the framework of the national relief operation, UNDP has prepared a plan to support rehabilitation activities in 28 districts for the benefit of 1 million anticipated returnees and for the local population. In Burundi, UNDP is assisting the Government to coordinate the repatriation programme and to mobilize resources for 550,000 anticipated returnees from the neighbouring countries. In Malawi, Lesotho, Swaziland, the United Republic of Tanzania and Zambia, health, water, fuelwood, road, and education projects are being launched. These projects are in line with the respective national development plans and are for the benefit of both refugees and the local population. In Ethiopia, UNDP participated in a multi-donor technical review of the country-wide refugee needs and assistance efforts.

20. In Sudan, UNDP continues to assist the Government in developing durable solutions for its affected populations by implementing programmes in food security, market interventions, credit for small enterprises, the replenishment of livestock and development in urban areas as well as the relocation of displaced persons to agricultural production areas.

21. The UNDP offices in Iraq and Kuwait have been re-established with the office in Kuwait now heavily involved in providing technical cooperation to the Government's new recovery strategies, particularly in the fields of manpower planning and environmental rehabilitation.

22. In Viet Nam, UNDP is preparing a framework for action for both the Government and donors in identifying priority assistance for Quang Ninh province in order to help stem the tide of boat people leaving it and also to attract such people from overseas camps. In this effort, UNHCR and UNDP collaborate: the former having the task of administering the repatriation of the boat people and the latter facilitating the creation of conditions conducive for such successful resettlement and reintegration into the local economy. In Afghanistan and Pakistan, UNDP, in collaboration with NGOs, continues to fund and execute cross-border rehabilitation and reconstruction projects in many sectors including agriculture, health and education. In Sri Lanka, UNDP provides technical cooperation for the Government's Emergency Reconstruction and Rehabilitation Programme to aid affected persons. A special mission from headquarters was fielded to assist in reviewing and revising the Programme.

23. Economic, social and political problems in Central America have created massive population displacement affecting 2.2 million people, or 9 per cent of the population of the subregion. Following General Assembly resolution 42/231 of 12 May 1988, in which it urged the international community and international organizations to increase their technical, economic and financial cooperation with the Central American countries for the implementation of the activities supporting the goals and objectives of the Special Plan of Economic Cooperation for Central America, an International Conference on Central American Refugees (CIREFCA) was held for the benefit of the Central American countries, Belize and Mexico. The CIREFCA three-year Action Plan, adopted in May 1989, entrusted UNDP and UNHCR with its coordination, implementation and follow-up. Projects under the CIREFCA Action Plan are currently being implemented by UNDP, UNHCR, other United Nations specialized agencies and NGOs.

24. The centrepiece of the plan is the Regional Development Programme for Displaced Persons (PRODERE) covering the six affected countries. PRODERE is managed by UNDP and is financed by a contribution of $115 million from the Government of Italy over a four-year period. PRODERE benefits 147,000 people directly and a further 305,000 indirectly. A June 1990 CIREFCA meeting, organized by UNDP, led to pledges of a further $160 million, covering 33 other projects funded by the international community.

III. PLANS FOR 1992

25. The period 1990 to 1991 has seen important initiatives to promote inter-agency collaboration, to establish better disaster-management skills and to improve the disaster response capacity of UNDP itself. During 1992, considerable effort will have to be made to sustain the momentum of those

initiatives. The strategy to be followed will encompass preparedness and response for all types of disasters and will move progressively through awareness creation, skills training, implementation of on-the-ground activities and their evaluation. Parallel to this effort, work will continue on developing the necessary policy and administrative tools to facilitate sound and speedy responses by UNDP. Among these tools, guidelines for mainstreaming women's concerns in this work will be developed in collaboration with the Division for Women in Development. Special emphasis will be given to resource mobilization efforts.

26. By mid-1992, regional courses given by the Disaster Management Training Programme will have been conducted for all four developing regions and country workshops will have been held in some 20 countries. Short orientation sessions will have been progressively introduced into UNDP regular training programmes. Training in linking emergency operations with long-term economic and social development work will thus be well under way.

27. Work will continue on developing the necessary policy and operational guidance to UNDP field staff to perform their functions in a team environment with other actors (inside and outside the United Nations system) in emergencies.

28. It is believed that this team approach will also be enhanced as UNDP works with UNHCR towards the second phase of a joint work programme for 1992. Having identified, among other action points, specific geographic areas for UNDP/UNHCR collaboration, the task ahead will be to identify and implement particular projects in those areas for assistance to refugees and returnees. Equally, the foreseen Inter-Agency review of the Disaster Management Training Programme and Disaster Manual will provide further strength to the team approach.

29. While the importance of NGOs in all these initiatives is well recognized, it is vital to do more to ensure that the efforts of the United Nations and the NGO sector are complementary. Therefore, UNDP, in conjunction with other United Nations specialized agencies, intends to initiate a systematic dialogue on these topics with NGOs during the second half of 1991, which, it is hoped, will result in the development of joint activities in the coming year.

30. UNDP will seek extrabudgetary funding during the course of 1991-1992 to launch two studies that are considered to be important for more effective disaster management. The first of these concerns the use of market mechanisms for addressing the immediate food needs of vulnerable groups and the second proposed study concerns regional approaches for dealing with refugees, returnees and displaced persons. Increasingly, assistance to the displaced, refugees and returnees needs to be seen also in interregional and trans-border contexts.

31. In the past few years, the United Nations Volunteers (UNV) programme has been playing an increasingly active role in fielding UNV specialists to assist United Nations agencies concerned with emergency relief and rehabilitation

programmes. Until now, each situation has been treated on a case-by-case basis. However, growing demand for UNV assistance in times of disasters has made it important to determine how best to utilize this resource in a more systematic way. The matter is currently under review.

IV. PROPOSALS FOR THE ESTABLISHMENT OF A UNDP HUMANITARIAN PROGRAMMES SUPPORT UNIT

32. The increasingly heavy burden of emergency-related activities described above cannot be absorbed into the regular UNDP programme. The international community reacts with great dispatch to emergencies as they often entail such widespread human suffering that normal development activities are perforce either brought to a halt or are very substantially disrupted. They require initially a speedy, well-coordinated and highly professional response from the United Nations system, and will, in the longer run, often call for major adjustments of development strategies to overcome their adverse effects.

33. In order to enable UNDP to respond effectively to this challenge, it is recommended that a new humanitarian programmes support unit be established to assist with the mainstreaming of all emergency-related activities into UNDP regular operations, both in the field and at headquarters.

34. The unit should work through existing UNDP operational structures i.e., the Regional Bureaux, rather than in a parallel manner. The UNDP role in these areas calls for a specialist unit which can liaise with and support the regional bureaux, BPPE, the Bureau for Finance and Administration (BFA), the Office for Project Services (OPS) and other programmes and funds under the authority of the Administrator. For this reason, the unit should be anchored in the Planning and Coordination Office, with the Senior Adviser reporting directly to the Administrator.

35. An important role of the unit would be to develop an institutional memory for the organization. Based on this institutional memory, and the expertise of the unit itself, the unit would take responsibility for the work programme outlined above, as well as for reviewing all proposals for allocations from the $50 million for earmarking for disaster mitigation from the SPR for the fifth programming cycle, within the framework of UNDP regular appraisal and approval processes. The unit would also provide technical comments on emergency-related projects which are presented for funding from intercountry or country IPFs and would encourage the inclusion of prevention and preparedness measures in the country programming process.

36. The unit would liaise with emergency units in UNICEF, WHO, WFP and UNHCR, as well as with UNDRO and other relevant parts of the United Nations Secretariat. Its creation would constitute a response by UNDP to General Assembly resolution 36/225 of 17 December 1981 on strengthening the capacity of the United Nations to respond to natural disasters and other disaster situations.

37. In view of the discussions held at the thirty-seventh session of the Governing Council, the Administrator has not included funding for this unit in his revised budget estimates for 1990-1991 and budget estimates for 1992-1993 (DP/1991/49/Vols. I and II)). Instead, one post would be devoted exclusively to ICARA-related matters, and would continue to be supported from the extrabudgetary ICARA budget (as has been the case for the past three years). As described in paragraph 57 of document DP/1991/49 (Vol. I), two posts related to emergency management are currently funded under the SPR. In view of recent events, particularly in Africa, the Gulf region and Bangladesh, and the other activities outlined in this paper, the Administrator proposes to fund an additional two posts from the SPR.

38. The Administrator intends to bring this matter once again before the Governing Council at a future session, at which point he may well propose the transfer of these posts to the budget for programme support development activities.